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Chairman: Mr. HAMBURGER (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 99: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(b) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (A/51/31, A/51/324)

1. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University), introducing the report of the Council of the University (A/51/31) and the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations University (UNU) (A/51/324), referred to the innovative action taken by the Secretary-General to improve communication and interaction between the University and other bodies in the United Nations system and to integrate its work in the system's activities.

2. In addition to the assistance it had provided in organizing the major global conferences of the United Nations and its planned participation in the special session of the General Assembly for the review of the questions of environment and development, in 1997, the University had dealt extensively with the issues considered in the Second and Third Committees, and in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

3. Concerning the report of the Council of the University, he said that his term of office would end in August 1997; therefore, he wished to mention what the University had accomplished and what remained to be done. UNU, in accordance with its mandate, must act as a bridge between the international scientific community and the world of policy-making, an objective which it had sought to meet by a number of means. While 10 years earlier, there had been only one operating research and training centre of the University, the World Institute for Development Economics Research, between 1986 and 1991, three additional centres had been established in Maastricht, Accra and Macau. During that period, the University had also established the Programme on Biotechnology for Latin America and the Caribbean in Caracas and a programme on governance in Barcelona.

4. More recently, the International Leadership Academy had been established in Amman with a view to building networks of leaders in order to enhance cooperation through dialogue and cultural exchange. The Institute for Advanced Studies, a branch of UNU located in Tokyo, which had focused its attention on environmental governance, had established a critical linkage between the international and Japanese academic communities and had already hosted more than 50 experts from various parts of the world. In September, the University had launched a new programme, the International Network on Water, Environment and Health in Ontario.

5. All those centres and activities had enjoyed the support of the Governments of the respective countries and regions, and of other Governments. In that connection, he thanked the representatives of Brazil, Canada, Finland, Ghana, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, the Netherlands, the People's Republic of China, Portugal, Venezuela and Zambia, the Government of Catalonia and the Governor of Macau for supporting the work of the University.

6. Despite the large reservoir of political and financial support enjoyed by the University in both developed and developing countries, its financial assets had been affected by monetary fluctuations, inflation and declining income from the United Nations University Endowment Fund, to which some major countries had not contributed, notwithstanding the fact that the University had established extensive academic networks with them. Financial constraints had made it necessary for the University to streamline and to reduce its expenditures: despite the increase in the number of research and training centres in different parts of the world, UNU staff had essentially not increased since 1986 and the staff at headquarters in Tokyo had been reduced drastically in the past 10 years. Efforts had also been made to decentralize the University's activities and to step up fund-raising in order to meet the needs of its expanding networks in the hope of strengthening the University's financial base.

7. Another problem facing the University was that it was still not sufficiently visible. That was due in part to the very nature of the institution, which was composed of a small core and a large, ever-changing network of scholars, making it difficult for it to acquire an institutional presence. Not even its distinguished publication programme, which had produced more than 400 titles, had enabled it to overcome that problem. It had therefore organized a number of public events in Tokyo, at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and at United Nations Headquarters related to its programmed or planned activities, although perhaps the answer to the problem lay in a more thorough use of available technology. Among the steps taken by the University in that connection were the organization of the Second UNU World Congress on Zero Emissions, held in Chattanooga (Tennessee), as part of its Zero Emissions Research Initiative.

8. He expressed his gratitude to the Council of the United Nations University for the support and guidance it had offered him in the discharge of his duties. He urged university circles around the world and the international community to cooperate with the University and to provide support to it so that it could create and mobilize the knowledge necessary for the furtherance of the United Nations ideals of development, welfare and human survival.

9. Mr. GRANT (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the report of the Council of the United Nations University (UNU) for the period January-December 1995 and the Secretary-General's report on that item. The European Union reiterated its support for UNU and the importance that it attached to the work of the University through its Tokyo headquarters and its regional centres and programmes, some of which were in countries members of the European Union. In particular, he wished to mention the work of the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) in Helsinki, which was currently focusing its research on Eastern European and Asian countries with economies in transition and on liberalization and development in sub-Saharan Africa. The European Union was of the opinion that the University's research on the United Nations in the twenty-first century was a welcome contribution to the ongoing discussion on the reform of the Organization.

10. The European Union noted the progress that had been made in ensuring more effective interaction between the University and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system and the efforts of the Rector and the UNU Council to

align the University's academic activities with the primary concerns of the United Nations. In that regard, UNU could strengthen its links with the United Nations Staff College in a joint effort to develop coordinated training programmes, especially in the fields of peacekeeping and sustainable development. The European Union also noted the Secretary-General's initiatives to allow for the University's more systematic participation in the work of the Organization, where appropriate, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary machinery. The University's third Medium-Term Perspective should allow it to contribute more effectively to the work of the United Nations.

11. The European Union believed that the University should further strengthen its coordination and interaction with the United Nations system as a whole, in particular the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and with other research institutions, and should avoid duplication of its activities. Further efforts were also necessary to ensure more effective dissemination of the work of the University within the United Nations system and among Member States.

12. The European Union welcomed the Canadian initiative in the field of water, environment and health research, which was of particular relevance to strengthening capacity-building in developing countries, and it would welcome additional information from UNU about the steps that had been taken to implement those initiatives.

13. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University), replying to the questions raised by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, agreed that the strengthening of the University's ties with the rest of the United Nations system was a fundamental issue on which UNU had been concentrating its efforts for some time.

14. With regard to the strengthening of links with the United Nations Staff College, which had its headquarters in Turin, he said that joint meetings had already been held with a view to determining the form in which the results of UNU research could be used in the College's training activities.

15. The Director of UNITAR was a member of the UNU Council and UNITAR had already made use of some publications and some results of UNU research in its professional training and research activities.

16. The University would continue disseminating, within the United Nations system and among Member States, materials published by its specialists, and it would be pleased to send detailed information on the initiative on the UNU International Network on Water, Environment and Health, which was already being carried out in Ontario. In that regard, UNU welcomed the decision of the Government of Canada to allocate Can$5 million in support of that initiative.

17. Mr. VALLE (Brazil) said that the substantive work of the University on a wide range of activities provided a significant contribution to the better understanding of major themes on the international agenda and promoted general awareness of global problems and the efforts being made to come up with realistic and responsible solutions. Studies prepared by UNU on issues related

to major United Nations conferences had proved extremely useful both during the preparatory process for those meetings and in their follow-up.

18. With regard to the strengthening of ties among the organizations of the United Nations system, the cooperation that had been established between UNU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was a clear example of the intellectual and material results that could be achieved.

19. After referring to UNU research in the fields of culture, finance, the environment, administration, science and technology, the dynamics of social welfare, growth and sustainable development, global governance and security, conflict resolution and ethnicity, international cooperation - especially South-South cooperation - and its importance for the work of the United Nations in general and the Second Committee in particular, he said that his delegation fully supported the work of the University and intended to maintain and expand the cooperative relationship that existed between UNU and several Brazilian institutions.

20. Finally, he expressed Brazil's appreciation to the Government of Japan for its continued support for the University.

21. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) thanked Brazil for its support for the University, which had taken the form of scholarships for staff from other developing countries to study and carry out research in Brazilian institutions, and welcomed Brazil's reaffirmation of its continued support.

22. Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. Finland attached great importance to the University, which was demonstrated by the fact that Finland was one of the major contributors to UNU and to UNU/WIDER, the first UNU-affiliated research centre, which had been established in Helsinki in 1984. For that reason, the Government of Finland wished to see UNU strengthened as a key coordinating institution of the United Nations research and training network. The University should strengthen its ties with Member States and with the United Nations and its agencies and programmes while retaining its institutional independence and close association with the academic community; UNU should be at the forefront of research and training activities of vital interest to States Members of the United Nations, in particular the developing countries. To that end, the University must have a strong research and training programme, adopt sound administrative practices, find a successful fund-raising strategy and maintain a good collaborative relationship with other United Nations institutions.

23. He expressed his appreciation for the work and dedication of the Rector of UNU and regretted that his term of office would soon expire. The Government of Finland had presented a Finnish candidate, who was supported by the other Nordic countries, to succeed him. In view of that candidate's considerable academic and administrative experience, the Government of Finland considered him an excellent choice and looked forward to the favourable consideration of his candidature.

24. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University (UNU)) said that he had attended the recent meeting of the Board of the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER); he was pleased to report that the Institute was doing excellent work. He was grateful for the support which UNU/WIDER and UNU had received from the Government of Finland, in the form of a contribution of $25 million to the Endowment Fund and another contribution of $7 million for operating costs. Lastly, he noted that a Finnish candidate was being considered for the office of Rector and, in that connection, said that the Board had appointed a special committee, which would meet in Chile in December, to submit recommendations on the election of the Rector to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Director-General of UNESCO.

25. Mr. CHOUINARD (Canada) said that he was grateful to the Council of the University for its report (A/51/31) and to the Secretary-General for his report (A/51/324), and highlighted the chapter on coordination and interaction within the United Nations system. His delegation fully supported such coordination.

26. He emphasized the establishment of the UNU International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU/INWEH), a UNU research and training programme which would be based in Ontario, Canada, and to which his Government would provide 5.25 million Canadian dollars over four years. The network would address critical issues relating to water and its impact on development and human health, which were of particular importance to developing countries. Its initial priority would be educational and training programmes aimed at strengthening academic institutions, the public sector and industry through human resources development; it would work closely with the United Nations, the UNU system and non-governmental organizations. His Government welcomed the establishment of the first UNU research and training programme in Canada, which would serve as a concrete contribution by Canada and the University to the global implementation of Agenda 21.

27. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) thanked the Canadian Government for its support for that important initiative, which would focus on establishing links with centres in developing countries in order to study issues of crucial importance to those countries, such as the protection and management of aquatic ecosystems, water and wastewater treatment, environmental assessment, toxicology, ecotoxicology and the impact of water on human health.

28. Mr. RUDENSKY (Russian Federation) said that he appreciated the reports of the Secretary-General and the UNU Council, and emphasized the proposals concerning the expansion of communication and interaction between the University and other bodies of the United Nations system. The reports contained appropriate analytical material for assessing the place and function of UNU within the United Nations system, but it would be useful for delegations to receive more information on UNU/WIDER and on the Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH).

29. In his view, those Institutes could play a more active role in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development with respect to problems concerning the establishment of sustainable production and consumption patterns. Moreover, UNU should focus on identifying and analysing new trends and on preparing

general guidelines related to new development problems, such as that of the emerging information society of the future. His delegation supported the proposal that UNU should participate regularly in the Administrative Committee on Coordination, as well as the establishment of an information service on UNU on the Internet, which would enable delegations to obtain information on the work and programmes of the University.

30. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) said that he would be happy to provide more information on UNU/WIDER and UNU/INTECH to the delegation of the Russian Federation. Activities related to the Commission on Sustainable Development were carried out primarily in other centres of the UNU system, such as the Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU/IAS) in Tokyo, where studies were conducted on sustainable development and on new industrial development models for the next century. With respect to new trends and problems concerning the information society and information economics, some activities had also been implemented in that area. Lastly, he said that UNU already had an information service on the Internet, located at "www.unu.edu".

31. Mr. ZOUBI (Jordan) said that his Government was convinced of the importance of the human dimension for sustainable development and that it therefore emphasized the education and training of young people. Thus, at Jordan's initiative, the UNU Council had decided, in December 1994, to establish the International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA) to provide suitable training for the leaders of the future. The training programme encompassed areas such as peace and security, civil society, sustainable development, food, population, environment, culture and religion and the world economy. The Academy sought to create an adequate database and to provide opportunities for scientific research in order to impart broad-based training to young people, as a means of preparing a generation of leaders free from prejudice.

32. Jordan was proud to have been chosen as the Academy's host country and had pledged, despite its limited resources, to contribute $1 million a year for the Academy's operation, thereby demonstrating its conviction that UNU played an outstanding and innovative role. For that reason, Jordan urged all countries which were in a position to do so to help finance UNU in a spirit of cooperation, and expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Council of the University for their diligence in promoting the Academy.

33. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) said that he fully supported the establishment of the Academy, which was greatly needed, and that he was pleased to announce that the Academy's Director had just been appointed and was already in Amman. He was certain that Jordan's major contribution to the Academy would bear fruit in the future, not only in that region but throughout the world.

34. Ms. DONG Guilan (China) praised the University for its achievements between 1990 and 1995, which was the period covered by the second Medium-Term Perspective, during which UNU, guided by its objectives of research, training and dissemination of research findings, had undertaken a great deal of work through the institutions linked to the University and through its own research and training programmes. The University's programmes and activities, which sought to enhance humanity's understanding of problems and their solutions in

areas such as development and environment and, in particular, to strengthen the scientific and technological capabilities of developing countries, had attracted worldwide attention.

35. Currently, the UNU Council was preparing the third Medium-Term Perspective, which would cover the period 1997-2002. The Chinese delegation hoped that, in identifying programme areas and projects, the Council would pay due attention to the needs of developing countries. In the light of its current financial situation, the University should draw up programmes and projects rationally and should improve its efficiency in order to play a more effective role. The Chinese Government had always attached great importance to its cooperation with UNU and had actively supported the establishment of the International Institute for Software Technology (UNU/IIST) at the University of Macau, inter alia, by donating $5 million for its construction. China would continue to support the work and activities of the University in the hope that it would play an even greater role in enhancing the scientific and technological capabilities of developing countries.

36. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) thanked the Government of China for its support for the University, particularly for the establishment of UNU/IIST in Macau. He had attended the recent meeting of the Institute's Executive Board, and the Institute was making great progress. Thanks to contributors (the People's Republic of China, Portugal and the Governor of Macau) the Endowment Fund had reached $30 million, which would allow the Institute to conduct its important work. He hoped that the Institute would expand its activities to different regions of the world, paying special attention to developing countries, as it had been established in order to meet their needs in technology and computer science.

37. Mr. SURIE (India) said that his delegation welcomed the University's efforts to expand its network of research and training programmes and centres. Those efforts should be further intensified, with particular attention being paid to the need to enhance the University's presence and role in the developing countries and to see that its work remained related to the emerging trends and discussions at the United Nations. India had taken a consistent interest in the important work carried out by the University and had contributed generously to the UNU Endowment Fund and the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER).

38. The University had an important role to play in the work of the United Nations. In particular, it could provide policy makers with useful analytical tools to understand a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world. The University's work thus far, for example, in the areas of disarmament, reform and restructuring of the United Nations and structures of multilateralism, along with its useful contributions in the context of the preparatory processes of the recent major conferences, was noteworthy.

39. In his delegation's view, one research area of particular relevance was science and technology, which played a central role in the promotion of sustainable development and figured prominently in Agenda 21. The University could focus part of its work on aspects of science and technology inherent in the issue of sustainable development, with a view to examining all the concrete

recommendations in Agenda 21 and defining relative priorities and methods to promote such activities at the national and international levels. Thus, it could contribute to a renewed and concerted long-term effort to promote international cooperation in the field of science and technology. Also, the University could conduct research and analytical work to determine output and input targets necessary in order to provide a catalyst for international cooperation for development, as had been proposed in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development.

40. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) expressed gratitude for India's generous contribution to the work of the University and of UNU/WIDER and for the participation of Indian scholars and academic institutions in University programmes. With regard to the proposal that the University should make contributions to the issues on the United Nations agenda, especially the recommendations on science and technology in Agenda 21, the University was already working in that area and intended to pursue those activities. As to information technology, both the Institute for New Technologies in Maastricht, the Netherlands (UNU/INTECH) and the UNU Centre in Tokyo were conducting activities in that field. Lastly, the University was beginning activities in the area of development and believed that it could make a contribution to the work of the United Nations in that field.

41. Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan) stressed the importance of the University, which, in the 20 years which had passed since its establishment in Tokyo, had become a global research institution with institutes for specialized research and training in various fields spread throughout the world. He welcomed the establishment of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Tokyo, the progress made by the International Leadership Academy in Amman, and the steps taken, in cooperation with the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario, Canada, towards initiation of the activities of the International Network on Water, Environment and Health.

42. While his Government welcomed the efforts of the University administration to enhance ties with other bodies within the United Nations system, it believed that more must be done in three areas of the University's work. First, its academic activities should be further strengthened through the necessary institutional adjustments. In particular, the Government of Japan would like to see a stronger academic branch at the University's headquarters in Tokyo. Second, the University should further enhance the visibility of its activities through wider publicity within the United Nations, particularly at Headquarters. His delegation had been particularly pleased with the recent series of public forums organized by the University to disseminate the results of its research, stimulate discussion on policy alternatives and promote an exchange of views. Third, the University should interact more with other bodies in the United Nations system so that its activities would have a direct influence on the system and the policy-making process. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/324), some progress was being made in that area. His delegation was also pleased to observe the University's involvement in the deliberations of the Second Committee through panel discussions and executive briefings.

43. The University should place greater emphasis on exploring, with objective and scientific tools, ways and means of implementing agreements reached at the recent series of major conferences, as well as other global initiatives for development, and then formulating those ideas as concrete policy recommendations. His delegation was planning to submit a draft resolution on the University that would deal with the three areas to which he had referred, and hoped that it would be given careful consideration by other Member States and be adopted at the current session.

44. Mr. GURGULINO DE SOUZA (Rector of the United Nations University) said that he agreed fully with the proposal to strengthen the University's academic activities. However, more resources would be needed to achieve that goal, since the cost of living in Japan was high for students; it had also been necessary to cut staff in recent years because of lack of resources.

45. The comment on enhancing the University's visibility was in full accord with the intentions of its founders, but it should be noted that the University had published 410 books as well as six academic journals, alone or in cooperation with other institutions. The majority were highly specialized publications on topics relating to the United Nations. The public forums which the University had organized in New York would continue and would soon begin at UNESCO.

46. The report of the Secretary-General referred to contained a great deal of information on the interaction between the University and the United Nations, and he therefore supported Japan's suggestion that such cooperation should take place on a system-wide basis through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary bodies. With regard to the University's work concerning the major United Nations summits and conferences, after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, two broad programmes had been established: one was the University's own "Agenda 21" to promote sustainable development; the other concerned a peace programme covering University activities on the United Nations in the twenty-first century, conflict resolution, democratization and development.

AGENDA ITEM 114: PROGRAMME PLANNING (A/51/16 (Part II), A/51/6 (Programmes 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18) and A/C.2/51/3)

47. Mr. ACUÑA (Costa Rica), speaking also on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the latter attached particular importance to agenda item 114 (Programme planning), since it dealt with the Organization's principal policy guidelines. It would be helpful to recall the guidelines that governed the planning process, in particular the provision that each Committee should consider in detail proposals for substantive programmes which were within its area of competence, given that increasing objections to such consideration were being raised by a group of countries that was trying to place the entire responsibility on the Fifth Committee, despite its professed support for resolution 41/213.

48. The Group of 77 and China reiterated the importance of establishing guidelines for programme planning for the period 1998-2001. They were of the view that the Second Committee should devote the time necessary for the

consideration of the items which concerned it and give a clear response with a view to establishing guidelines that could be used by the Fifth Committee. Since it was crucial that programme planning should adequately reflect the Organization's role in the field of development, the Group of 77 and China were gravely concerned by the constant reduction in the resources allocated to programmes in that field, in contravention of the commitments undertaken by the international community in favour of the economic and social development of the developing countries.

49. It was also a matter of concern that new concepts were introduced into the consideration of the medium-term plan which had not yet been debated and on which there were widely differing views. Consequently, the Group of 77 and China hoped that the Second Committee would assume its responsibility and ensure that programmes in those spheres within its competence were planned in accordance with its own technical and expert guidelines and thereby adequately responded to the request of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. The programmes recommended by the Fifth Committee would thus be tailored not only to financial and budgetary constraints but also to the identifiable needs of Member States, particularly the developing countries.

50. Mr. GRANT (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union recognized the importance of priority-setting for United Nations programmes and noted that consideration of agenda item 114 would take place in the Fifth Committee. Accordingly, the representatives of the Union's member States in the Second Committee would act in concert with their respective Fifth Committee colleagues with a view to formulating a European Union position on the various programmes.

51. Ms. LEBL (United States of America) said that the medium-term plan was meant to be used as a tool for providing substantive programme planning which could then be used for preparing future budgets. Unfortunately, however, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had failed to reach consensus on the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, despite the fact that the budget process for the following biennium had already begun.

52. The United States felt that CPC should fulfil its role of reviewing both the programmatic and budgetary aspects of the Organization's activities and, through its recommendations, ensure that the activities and resource allocations of the Organization faithfully reflected the mandates and priorities set by Member States. Even though CPC had not accomplished that objective at its thirty-sixth session and some parts of the medium-term plan remained in brackets, it had reached consensus on the specific programmes on which comments had been solicited from the Second Committee. In relation to two of those programmes, which were concerned with trade and development (programme 9) and human settlements (programme 11), it had not been possible to complete work at that time and the final results had been delayed pending additional inputs.

53. The report on the work of CPC at its thirty-sixth session (A/51/16 (Part II)) accurately reflected the substantive views of the United States on those programmes. In addition, there had been little discussion of how the reform and restructuring initiatives already agreed on or under discussion could be translated into concrete decisions that would make the United Nations a more

effective, efficient and modern organization. She wished to re-emphasize that the financial resources of the United Nations were limited and must be used wisely. If advantage was not taken now of opportunities to strengthen and revitalize the Organization, it would be more difficult to do so in the future. In that spirit, the United States looked forward to the results of the Fifth Committee's deliberations on the issue and intended to consult with its colleagues thereon.

54. Mr. CABACTULAN (Philippines) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 was the embodiment of what the United Nations system would do concretely or pursue in the years ahead. As such, it should fully reflect the priorities envisaged by the Member States and the emphasis for each programme or subprogramme should be clear to all. The relevant Main Committees of the General Assembly must therefore discharge responsibly the tasks assigned to them to examine the programmes or subprogrammes that fell within their respective spheres of competence.

55. While his delegation acknowledged the specific legislative mandates that had been referred to during the preparation of the draft medium-term plan by the Secretariat and during the consideration of that document by CPC and subsequently by the Fifth Committee, in its view, that exercise required that the draft plan should be brought before the competent Committees of the General Assembly to ensure consistency with what Member States really wanted in the plan, which would be consistent with the improvement of the consultative process, as called for in General Assembly resolution 41/213. The fulfilment of that responsibility in the Main Committees should not be considered a mere formality with the task of doing the job being ultimately left to the Fifth Committee.

56. As part of the reform process, his delegation was even prepared to explore the possibility that in the future specific programmes and subprogrammes of the medium-term plan should first be submitted to the relevant Main Committees before they were brought before the Fifth Committee, given that the Main Committees were not only the repositories of the relevant legislative mandates for those programmes and subprogrammes but also the bodies that were intimately involved in the incorporation of the various positions of countries into the mandates contained in United Nations resolutions and decisions.

57. In the case of programme 9 (Trade and development), for instance, the Second Committee had not yet considered the results of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and its follow-up in the recent meeting of the Trade and Development Board, which would have enabled it to recommend the inclusion of appropriate programme emphasis in the medium-term plan. The same was true with respect to programme 11 (Human settlements), to which the Second Committee could provide appropriate inputs on the basis of the results of Habitat II. With respect to programme 6 (Africa: new agenda for development), it was important that the results of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should find expression in the priorities and programme emphasis of the medium-term plan.

58. The Fifth Committee should not be rushed into action on the subject, since that would endanger the practice of reaching decisions by consensus. The Second Committee should devise an approach based on its usual procedures in order to continue its review and produce a result that would enable an appropriate response to be given to the letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

59. He wished to draw attention to the draft document entitled "Perspective" (A/51/6 (Note)), which outlined the broad areas of priority for the medium-term plan. The Philippines was of the view that the draft should be included as an integral part of the medium-term plan, given its fundamental importance to the adoption of the plan as a whole. That position was in accord with previous agreements, including the provisions contained in General Assembly resolution 41/213. Since it appeared that there was still a long way to go before consensus was reached on the content of the draft, there might be some merit to reviewing those sections and programmes relating to development issues which were within the Committee's areas of competence.

60. Mr. PEDROSO (Cuba) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His delegation believed that the statement unambiguously reflected the importance of considering programme planning. It was necessary to re-establish a practice which was increasingly being violated even though it had been duly established by a General Assembly mandate. It was surprising that considerable efforts had been made to prevent the Second Committee from taking up the item.

61. It was particularly important to consider programme 9, concerning trade and development, because the Trade and Development Board and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had been unable to consider all the issues arising within the scope of that programme for the following biennium. It was essential to consider subprogramme 9.2, dealing with investment, enterprise development and technology. Among the objectives of that subprogramme, his delegation wished to highlight the importance of analysing the relevance of a possible multilateral framework on investment. However, the need to take full account of the interests of developing countries in those analyses did not figure in the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

62. Moreover, the Secretariat's proposal for programme 9 also failed to include the former subprogramme devoted to small island States. In that respect, his delegation noted that the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had established, by mandate, specific activities to be carried out by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in order to ensure that the results of the Global Conference were effectively followed up. His Government believed that those omissions in the proposed medium-term plan should be rectified.

63. There should also be an assessment of the outcome of the meeting of the Trade and Development Board and the loss of systematic support for debt management in developing countries.

64. The programme relating to human settlements and follow-up activities to Habitat II should be studied carefully, as should the strategy for implementing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. His

delegation wished to stress that all those issues should be studied in informal consultations.

65. Mr. ACEMAH (Uganda) endorsed the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and drew attention to the conclusions of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. That assessment had clearly shown that, among other factors, the weakness of the follow-up arrangements of the New Agenda had been one of the main reasons for its poor implementation. The most notable shortcomings were at the advocacy and institutional levels; the New Agenda had not been adequately promoted because of the lack of clear mandates, policy directions and resources. It had therefore been recommended, inter alia, that monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and follow-up of the New Agenda at the national, regional and global levels should be improved and that the advocacy and implementation of the New Agenda in the United Nations system should be reviewed in order to enhance coordination among the relevant bodies.

66. In order to put those recommendations into effect, the activities envisaged under programme 6 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 should be provided with adequate resources, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/151. In addition, there was a need for effective coordination of the work of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, as well as the activities being undertaken at the country level within the framework of the resident coordinator system.

67. More consideration should be given to aspects of the work of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development relating to the multilateral financial and trade institutions and the donor community, and the aspects of its work which highlighted activities at the regional and especially the country level in Africa. It was important to establish a mechanism which would facilitate the sharing of experiences arising from the implementation of the New Agenda. His Government endorsed the view of the Committee for Programme and Coordination that the programme for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) should give adequate treatment to certain important programme activities such as those relating to trade, external debt, the fight against animal and human diseases, crime prevention and international assistance.

68. When considering the CPC recommendation on the need to press ahead with the programme of internal restructuring of ECA, it was important to remember that the regional commissions should be provided with the necessary resources to carry out their mandates.

69. His delegation believed that the recommendations arising from the ninth session of UNCTAD and Habitat II should be fully implemented, and to that end the contents of draft programmes 9 and 11 should be updated.

70. As a least developed country, Uganda had a keen interest in the implementation of paragraph 114 of the final document of the ninth session of UNCTAD, which dealt with the work of the entity handling the problems of least

developed countries, small island developing States and land-locked developing countries.

71. Mr. ABDELLATIF (Egypt), associating his delegation with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the CPC discussions had illustrated the tendency to play down the role of the United Nations in the development sphere. He reiterated that development had an economic and social side which could affect countries' stability and in turn represent a threat to peace.

72. The medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 had been very ambitious. A large number of conferences had been held; unfortunately, it had not been possible to meet all the commitments that had been undertaken.

73. Compared with the work undertaken between 1994 and 1995, only 68 per cent of projects had been implemented and not all goals had been met.

74. It was surprising that the Secretariat had proposed a new plan scheduled to run to the year 2001 without taking due account of the need to continue with the previous plan.

75. Regarding programme 5, dealing with policy coordination and sustainable development, his Government did not believe that the title fully reflected the role played by the United Nations in the development field. It should be much more specific, so that the work which had been done in connection with the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s could be assessed. Nor did the wording of the programme adequately reflect the contents of the New Agenda or the responsibility of the international community for the economic recovery of Africa. There should be some indication of the reasons for the meagre progress made in that regard. For example, reference should be made to inadequate financial resources, the importance of resource mobilization and technology transfer and the problem of external debt. The programme should also list the initiatives that had been undertaken in Africa in various development fields.

76. Regarding programme 7, dealing with economic and social information and policy analysis, his delegation believed that it would not be possible to meet the targets that had been set.

77. With regard to programme 9, the work carried out by UNCTAD should be borne in mind. Subprogramme 9.5 (Least developed countries, landlocked and island developing countries) must be designed in a more appropriate way so as to prevent the marginalization of those countries and ensure that they received increased investment flows.

78. With regard to programme 10 (Environment), it was necessary to address the issue of desertification and drought in Africa, in addition to the question of technology transfer and the mobilization of financial resources to provide assistance to developing countries affected by environmental degradation.

79. With regard to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the emphasis should be placed on quantifiable results, and the

possibilities for action at the international level to aid in African recovery should be clarified. He was concerned at the omission of such issues as the external debt, the fight against acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), crime prevention and international development assistance.

80. It was important that the views expressed in the current debate and, in particular, the replies that were to be transmitted to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, should be summarized objectively.

81. Mr. AZAIEZ (Tunisia) said that he concurred with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and supported the initiative to ensure that the items considered by each of the Main Committees were submitted to the competent bodies prior to their consideration by the Fifth Committee. That approach fostered consultation, the search for consensus, transparency and thus efficiency. It also involved the Main Committees in the adoption of decisions.

82. He stressed the political dimension of the Second Committee's work. Decisions should not be adopted merely on the basis of budgetary considerations. Development was a key aspect of the mandate of the United Nations, and programmes in that area should receive priority attention. The Organization's financial difficulties should not be used as a pretext for reducing the scope of such programmes.

83. Lastly, the Committee should have the time necessary for effective considerations of the items on its agenda.

84. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and Bolivia and Chile, drew attention to programmes 9 and 17, to which those countries attached the highest priority.

85. With regard to programme 9 (Trade and development), the recommendations of the Trade and Development Board on that subject should be transmitted promptly to the Fifth Committee.

86. With regard to the reforms within the United Nations system, which should be aimed at strengthening the role of the Organization in the development sphere, it was regrettable that such reforms had, in many cases, been motivated solely by budget cuts. He stressed the importance of deepening the analysis of crucial development issues.

87. UNCTAD had already implemented substantive reforms which had been duly recognized, even in the joint communiqué issued by the Group of Seven. The MERCOSUR countries and Bolivia and Chile hoped that the medium-term plan would give priority to UNCTAD and to the need to mobilize resources for the implementation of the work programme approved at the ninth session of UNCTAD.

88. With regard to programme 17 (Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean), he drew attention to the important role played by the regional commissions in incorporating a regional dimension into the programmes and activities of the United Nations. On various occasions, proposals had been made with a view to reducing the role of the regional commissions or transferring their functions to other institutions. Such

proposals were viewed with alarm in the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile since, in their view, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which had made a significant contribution to the development of regional economic thought, should continue to be a centre of excellence. It was important for ECLAC to continue collaborating with member Governments in the analysis of development processes and the design, follow-up and assessment of public policies, and to provide technical assistance in the areas of specialized information, advisory assistance, training and support for regional cooperation. The MERCOSUR countries and Bolivia and Chile, which supported reforms aimed at improving the functioning of the regional commissions, believed that such reforms should be adapted to the regional context.

89. Mr. OJIMBA (Nigeria) said that he concurred fully with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and reiterated firmly that the Committee should not be subject to pressure to expedite its work. With regard to the letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.2/51/3), he wished to place on record his view that socio-economic and development questions warranted the allocation of the time needed for their consideration, so that issues related to programmes and planning could be discussed adequately.

90. With regard to the coordination of United Nations activities in the development sphere, he drew attention to programme 9; while the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had just been completed, it had not yet been possible to give due consideration to the report.

91. His delegation, mindful of the current reform process, was especially concerned about the implementation of the results of recent major conferences and of decisions adopted in the framework of intergovernmental negotiating forums, such as the ninth session of UNCTAD.

92. Mr. MEROUANE (Algeria), after supporting the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed the importance of the item under consideration and of the understanding that each programme of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 would be submitted to the Main Committees for review, which would enhance the efficiency and coordination of the Organization's work. Such coordination would prevent the hopes on which United Nations resolutions in the field of economic and social development had been based from being thwarted by considerations of a budgetary and cyclical nature. The programmes contained in the medium-term plan should be consistent with the mandates derived from the resolutions adopted, for the absence of such consistency, might call into question the Committee's work.

93. The austerity measures resulting from the financial crisis of the Organization should not be reflected in the curtailment or cancellation of activities or programmes which were constantly being singled out as reflecting a priority, nor should it invalidate the commitments entered into at the various conferences held in recent years with a view to promoting economic and social development for all.

94. It followed from the above that the Second Committee should have the time necessary for due consideration of the proposed programmes and should thus

contribute to the adequate preparation of the medium-term plan. Any curtailment of the measures and activities recommended with a view to improving the economic and social situation, especially in the developing countries, would be tantamount to seeking to perpetuate the alarming situation that prevailed in certain regions, particularly in Africa. The content of each programme submitted for consideration by the Committee reflected a priority aspect of development and should guide the Committee's work.

95. Mr. GARCÍA-GONZÁLEZ (El Salvador), speaking in his capacity as interim coordinator of the Central American countries, said he supported the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China and noted the importance of fulfilling the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213, which, inter alia, called on the Fifth Committee to consult with the relevant committees regarding their priorities before taking a decision on the programmes and budgets within its authority.

96. He supported the proposal of the Group of 77 and China to establish an informal group to consider programmes that could be affected if a decision of the Fifth Committee did not take account of the priorities established by the Second Committee or by other committees. That group could meet for two weeks under the leadership of a Vice-Chairman of the Second Committee. The results of the informal consultations would be communicated to the Fifth Committee.

97. Mr. NEBENZYA (Russian Federation) said he welcomed the consideration of programme matters relating to the work of the Second Committee; unfortunately, however, that task was being carried out on the basis of the current work programme and on a very tight schedule.

98. Notwithstanding the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213, the current work programme was inadequate in that it did not allow interested parties to thoroughly consider programme matters; that possibility existed only within the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). As a general rule, however, the analysis fell to other persons. In practice, programme matters were sometimes fully debated, while at other times they did not receive the attention they deserved. The experts on the Second Committee should be able to consider programme matters, so that such problems would not arise in the General Assembly. In that regard, he supported the review of CPC activities called for in General Assembly resolution 50/227.

99. The programmes submitted for the consideration of the Second Committee were being examined at the current session of CPC, and the experts would present their comments on them. Perhaps programmes submitted separately could be considered when the corresponding documentation became available, taking into account, in particular, the results of the session of the Trade and Development Board.

100. He asked when those documents would be available and under what format they would be considered; he also wished to know how the Second Committee would proceed with respect to programme matters that were not being considered by the Fifth Committee.

101. Mr. A'ALA (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed support for Costa Rica's statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said it was appropriate to express opinions on programme planning for the medium term, as doing so would make the work of the Fifth Committee more productive. It would promote the transparency in the consideration of issues and would improve the process of negotiation within the United Nations.

102. Development occupied a priority position among the various programmes of the Organization; it was to be hoped that the Second Committee would devote more time to considering development programmes, which would help it in its work.

The meeting was suspended at 5.22 p.m. and resumed at 5.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/51/256, A/51/357, A/51/391, A/51/208-S/1996/543, and A/51/462-S/1996/831)

103. Mr. AHMED (Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) noted that as far back as 1977 the General Assembly, in its resolution 32/197, had called for "a real increase in the flow of resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis", and he stressed that the level of resources made available for those activities was a reflection of political choices, shaped by various factors, made by Member States.

104. In 1983 the concept of optional multi-year voluntary pledges had been launched, under which donors had been requested to establish a floor to their contributions to UNDP for a three-year period, thereby making income more predictable. That system had proved unsatisfactory, however, and in 1989 the Governing Council had called for proposals to establish a more stable growth pattern for UNDP resources, in view of the evident stagnation in voluntary contributions to core resources. In response to that concern, the Administrator had prepared a report, subsequently adopted by the Governing Council, which recognized that core resources would remain of primary importance but also addressed the need to achieve an appropriate balance between core and non-core resources. Non-core contributions had first been made in 1973 at a level of $US 1 million. They had reached $US 181 million in the late 1980s, and in 1995 amounted to $US 899 million, or roughly 49 per cent of UNDP income.

105. At its 1995 annual session, the Executive Board had adopted a mandate for change in which it set out priority areas and goals for UNDP in future, with the result that 83 per cent of UNDP core funds were currently allocated to 50 countries having an annual per capita gross national product (GNP) of $US 750 or less. The Board had adopted, for planning purposes, a figure of $US 3.3 billion for core resources for the three-year period starting in 1997. It was therefore imperative that the countries that endorsed the dramatic changes in UNDP should bolster those changes through increased contributions. UNDP and its affiliated operational activities agencies had enormous capacity to make a real difference in the lives of the world's poorest people, but not without adequate levels of core funding.

106. The comprehensive discussions on the administrative and financial challenges faced by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which

had taken place at the third session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in September 1996 were to be understood in that context. UNDP was discussing modifications of the formulas of the partial funding system in order to ensure that the system adequately reflected the Fund's situation. UNIFEM would prepare a proposal, to be considered by the Board at its January 1997 session, for the reinstatement of the partial funding mechanism and, in anticipation of that reinstatement it had restored its operational reserve at $US 3 million, which it considered to be an appropriate level. In response to the Executive Board's decision 95/10, external evaluation had been carried out that had resulted in a comprehensive set of recommendations on the Fund's strategies, programmes, structures and operational tools. The Fund had taken immediate steps in various areas in response to the evaluation report.

107. In UNDP, a process for strengthening collaboration with UNIFEM had already been initiated. The UNDP Executive Board had concluded its deliberations on UNIFEM by adopting decision 96/43, which addressed programme strategies, management and administration, coordination with the United Nations system on gender issues, the relationship between UNIFEM and UNDP, and financial and reporting arrangements. The Committee's attention was also drawn to a note by the Secretary-General on the advancement of women (A/51/391), containing an account of UNIFEM activities during 1995. The report highlighted work done by UNIFEM within the United Nations system towards creating an enabling environment for the incorporation of gender concerns into the system's development work and provided a comprehensive picture of the Fund's financial management, operational programme and advocacy initiatives on behalf of women. UNIFEM would present an outline of its strategy and work plan at the first session of the Executive Board in 1997.

108. Mr. ACUÑA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group of 77 and China continued to attach the highest importance to operational activities for development and noted that, in its resolution 50/120, the General Assembly reaffirmed that operational activities for development within the United Nations system had a critical and unique role to play in enabling developing countries to continue to take a lead role in the management of their own development process with the support of the international community. However, as the resolution noted with regret, although significant progress had been made in the restructuring and rationalization of the governance and functioning of the United Nations development funds and programmes, there had not been, as part of the overall reform process, any substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, nor had the consultations on prospective new modalities for financing reached a conclusion. On the contrary, resources for multilateral development cooperation had continued to decline.

109. Needless to say, the Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as an agency that had long contributed significantly to complementing the national efforts of developing countries to promote and foster their social and economic development. The Group of 77 and China were therefore concerned about the difficult financial situation that UNDP had been experiencing since its fifth cycle as a result of the continuing decrease in and unpredictability of voluntary contributions to its core resources. The Group of 77 and China also

attached great importance to the resident coordinator system as a means of enhancing the capacity of the United Nations development system to work in a coordinated manner, thus making for efficient use of the available resources.

110. His delegation wished to express its appreciation to those donor countries that had maintained or even increased their official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries. ODA remained crucially important to many countries that were becoming increasingly marginalized by the globalization of the economy, especially since foreign investments favoured only a handful of developing countries. On the other hand, although the United Nations was in need of reform, reform alone would not bring increased resources. Nor had solemn commitments for development cooperation or solemn commitments made at United Nations conferences led to an increase in resources. Clearly, a new approach was needed.

111. First, Member States should intensify the search for new and innovative sources of funding to supplement rather than replace ODA. Secondly, available ODA should increasingly be used as a means of generating new and additional resources for development cooperation. Thirdly, it was necessary to continue efforts to enhance the efficiency of ODA utilization. Finally, it should be emphasized that, as long as no acceptable alternative to ODA existed, the Group of 77 and China could not abandon ODA as the principal means of promoting multilateral development cooperation.

112. The high-level operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council was expected to take up the issue of financing operational activities for development at its substantive session of 1997. That would provide an opportunity to continue dialogue on that important issue and to consider possible action. The Secretariat should clarify why the Secretary-General had not submitted a report on operational activities to the current session. The Secretariat should also state whether the regular budget of the United Nations provided resources to finance the preparation of such a report, and whether in the recent past certain reports had been financed through extrabudgetary resources.

113. Mr. STOBY (Director, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), responding to the questions asked by the representative of Costa Rica, said that, as far as he was aware, and in line with the relevant provisions, the Secretary-General was not due to submit a report on United Nations operational activities for development to the current session, although he had submitted a report on that item to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996 (E/1996/64). In accordance with its usual practice, which it had followed for more than 10 years, the Secretariat had received extrabudgetary assistance to complete its triennial policy review of operational activities for development. To that end, the Trust Fund for Case Studies in Operational Activities for Development had been established, and it had received substantial support from such countries as France, the United Kingdom, Japan and Switzerland. The management process that had been formulated contained a detailed account of the measures envisaged for the triennial review and, in connection with that process, the Secretary-General called on Member States to support the Trust Fund.

114. Mr. AHMED (Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China with regard to the serious decline in ODA in recent years. Regarding the changes introduced by UNDP, he said that the process would continue with a view to implementing programmes that were more cost-effective and better suited to the priorities of associated countries.

115. Ms. BROWN (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, referred to two aspects of agenda item 98, namely, resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children, and the functioning of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). With regard to the first issue, her delegation wished to indicate that any measures adopted by the Second Committee should not only consolidate what had been achieved but also determining what should be done in future. The European Union believed that adjustments and changes of direction would have to be made to the work in the course of the next five years, and offered to participate on an ongoing basis in the consultations to be held on the matter.

116. With reference to UNIFEM, her delegation took note of decision 96/43 of the Executive Board of UNDP, which set out a timetable for follow-up to the recommendations of the external evaluation. The European Union welcomed the initial steps taken by UNIFEM and looked forward to a comprehensive consideration in January 1997 of the Fund's future directions based on its response to the evaluation report. The European Union believed that, given the resources available, UNIFEM should focus on a limited number of objectives in order to carry out its mandate as effectively as possible, and hoped that decision 96/43 would be reflected in the relevant resolution of the Third Committee.

117. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that the recent decision of the Economic and Social Council reflected the position of Member States on the need to harmonize and coordinate the efforts of the various organs, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations in the field of operational activities for development, and referred in particular to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120.

118. In that connection, he welcomed the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination regarding the vigorous implementation of that resolution, the crucial role which the United Nations could play in supporting the efforts of developing countries and the decision to strengthen collaboration among its member organizations through the resident coordinator system to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of Assembly resolutions 50/120 and 47/199.

119. He also appreciated the Administrative Committee's comments on the development of updated guidelines on the country strategy note process, the programme approach, national execution and the functioning of the resident coordinator system. Those commitments of the Administrative Committee were especially important in view of the fact that the harmonization and simplification of procedures remained a problem, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report (E/1996/64). That report also noted that recipient countries must comply with reporting requirements, reporting formats and monitoring and evaluation systems which differed from donor to donor, placing a heavy burden on

the limited human resources of most developing countries, even when they received help from UNDP country offices in support of national execution.

120. With respect to country strategy notes, he stressed that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/120, such notes were a voluntary initiative on the part of recipient countries. He supported the suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report for improving their functioning. It was encouraging that the country notes available to date focused on specific objectives such as poverty eradication, human resources development and support for economic growth, and that specialized agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) contributed to the preparation of the notes.

121. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/120, various measures had been taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system. He supported the proposal, contained in the Secretary-General's report (E/1996/64, para. 75 (d)), that resident coordinators should promote the effective exchange of information and the use of common databases in planning, reporting and monitoring activities.

122. In relation to the overall method of evaluating the impact of operational activities, the United Nations system could use, as a basis, the results obtained by individual countries in implementing the programmes of action of major international conferences, inter alia in the areas of improving the status of women, alleviating poverty, achieving sustainable development and ensuring the right to housing. With respect to the management process referred to in General Assembly resolution 50/120, the suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report were interesting, since they concerned the clear and concise formulation of the objectives and measures to be adopted in terms of programmes, coordination, impact assessment and resources.

123. The issue of resources was the key component of any development activity, and he regretted the failure to provide adequate resources, on favourable terms, to multilateral development institutions, as well as the difficulties faced by those institutions in assisting countries in their struggle against poverty. Tunisia joined the Economic and Social Council in urging developed countries to achieve, as soon as possible, the goal of setting aside 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. General Assembly resolution 50/227 affirmed that there was a need for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development, on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries.

124. Mr. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation) highlighted the importance of taking an interdisciplinary, system-wide approach to the implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit for Children. Although it must be recognized that UNICEF played a leading role in that process, all of the organizations of the system must adopt a more coordinated approach to that task. In that connection, it was vital to improve the interaction among UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNFPA on health issues, particularly in the context of the activities carried out by the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy; between UNICEF and UNESCO in the field of education; between

UNICEF and the Committee on the Rights of the Child with regard to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; between UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in solving the problems of children of refugees and displaced persons and children affected by armed conflicts; and among UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Bretton Woods institutions in improving environmental and sanitary conditions.

125. The need to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination in alleviating poverty deserved special attention, since poverty caused many of the problems that affected children and young people. The agreed conclusions of the July 1996 session of the Economic and Social Council with respect to the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system for poverty eradication had helped to strengthen the system's capacity in that area. At the Secretariat level, the potential of the recently established inter-agency task forces should be utilized to contribute to the implementation of the decisions taken at major global conferences.

126. The Russian Federation expected that Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/43 on strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions, adopted at the 1996 substantive session, would provide the necessary impetus for more profound cooperation between those two groups, both at the level of Headquarters and in the field. It was particularly important to ensure their teamwork at the country level.

127. With respect to the process of reforming United Nations bodies in the economic and social fields, the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/227 and of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/41, which established a schedule for the implementation of reform measures, should be considered a step forward. The management excellence reform of UNICEF was progressing dynamically. Also of interest was the reform process undertaken by UNDP.

128. Lastly, he was pleased to note that, while paying priority attention to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable countries, the United Nations operational programmes and funds strove to take into account the interests of other groups of countries, including the special needs of countries with economies in transition.

129. Mr. AHMED (Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme) said, in response to the statement of Tunisia, that UNDP would continue to collaborate with the other participants in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, particularly UNICEF and UNFPA, in harmonizing budget formats.

130. With respect to the preparation of country strategy notes, a growing number of countries were participating in that process, which many of them saw as a useful tool for approaching their relationship with the United Nations system as a whole.

131. With respect to the issue of country-level coordination, UNDP was pursuing its efforts to strengthen the resident coordinator system. The Executive Board had decided that 1.7 per cent of its resources would be earmarked for that purpose, but it also expected that the other agencies and programmes would join

the efforts of UNDP to provide country-level support. Special attention would be paid to conducting separate performance evaluations of resident representatives in terms of the functioning of the resident coordinator system.

132. In response to the statement of the Russian Federation, he noted that the reforms undertaken by UNDP would enable it to address its priority areas of work more effectively, pursuant to its mandate.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.